

Glad You Asked!

Q. Are charities and fundraising a part of every chapter?

A. Many Chapters support charities, and almost all have fundraisers. Let's start with fundraising. It takes money to operate a Chapter. The CD is not responsible for funding the Chapter activities, so a fundraiser (for Chapter Operating Funds) is normal and expected. Fundraising can occur in many ways, such as a bake sale, a poker run, a rally, garage sale, a bug run, a chili cook-off, 50-50s, and raffles to name a few. The chapter should have enough funds in its (non-interest bearing) checking account to last between 6 to 12 months. The next logical question (although not specifically asked) is "What are Chapter funds used for?" In days of old, newsletters had to be printed and mailed. This was typically the largest use of Chapter funds. Now with e-mail and websites, this is largely a thing of the past. However, some hard copies are still required for members without e-mail, to have handy for guests at Chapter gatherings, and to provide to the local motorcycle dealer or possibly businesses that advertise in the newsletter. Other Chapter expenses would be reimbursement for Officers to travel in order to take the Officer Certification Program, or reimbursement for travel to District Staff meetings. Additionally, some Chapters own equipment (computers, software, banners, scrapbooks, etc.) that would have been purchased with Chapter funds. Expenses associated with a rally or fundraiser would also be covered by Chapter funds. Finally, it is not uncommon for Chapters to pay for all or portions of holiday parties, or even buy ice cream for participants on rides, or meals if the amount of Chapter funds is sufficient.

*Now, for Charities: There are a lot of good charities out there, and many of us have our personal favorite that we contribute to (if we are fortunate enough to be able to part with some of our hard earned cash). Many Chapters have a charity that they "sponsor." That is perfectly fine, as long as it is **OPTIONAL** to Chapter participants. No GWRRA member should be forced to contribute or made to feel obligated to participate in or contribute to a charity. If there are organizational or planning meetings for the charity, they are to be held outside of the Chapter Gathering, so that GWRRA members at the gathering are not forced to sit through the charity business. It can be held after the Chapter gathering, and interested parties can stay, but again, it is an activity supplemental to the Chapter activities, and must always be presented as an "optional" activity. (Note: Sharing information about charities or charity fundraisers at a Chapter gathering is totally appropriate – it is the business of planning and organizing a charity that must remain outside the Chapter gathering.) The reason for this separation is simple. If the charity becomes a mandatory part of Chapter life, or if there is perceived pressure to donate or participate, the members that aren't interested in charities, can't afford to donate the time or money, or simply prefer a different charity will simply stop participating with the Chapter. And we don't want that! The primary purpose for Chapters is to provide a fun social organization for GWRRA members. Any other "cause" must be supplemental to this purpose, and by all means, "optional."*